AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

(1)   Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 10 as follows:

In order to remain competitive in any business, the business and each of its individual parts or business units must run efficiently to meet or exceed the demands of its customers. For example, in the hospitality industry, a typical facility, such as a hotel, spa, or other hospitality facility, includes several areas of operation. Each area of operation requires a certain level of personnel, maintenance, supplies, and management during each year. In the hospitality industry the day-to-day needs of each area of operation are subject to significant change, which the management responsible for each area of the facility must accommodate. Accordingly, an important aspect of operation is budgeting and forecasting to properly adapt to the changing circumstances so as to maximize profits.

(2)   Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 14 as follows:

Turning now to Fig. 1, a budget forecasting system 10 in accordance with an aspect of the present invention is illustrated. The system 10 includes a plurality of facility management systems (FMS) 12 that may communicate with a central server 14 through a network infrastructure, such as the Internet 16. Each FMS 12 is operative to receive data from a plurality of data collecting sources 20, 22, and 24. The data sources 20, 22, and 24 may be operatively connected to the FMS 12 or the data may be communicated from the nodes to the FMS by other data transfer mechanisms (e.g., data [[may]] for a data source may be entered directly into the FMS). While, for purposes of illustration, three such data sources 20, 22, and 24 are shown in Fig. 1 as being associated with each FMS, it will be understood and appreciated by those skilled in the art that any number of such data sources may be implemented in a system 10, in accordance with the present invention. It also is to be appreciated that the system 10 alternatively may be configured such that each data source communicates directly with the central server 14 for transmitting and receiving data.

(3)   Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 15, line 5 as follows:

The system 150 includes several operative components (or interactive tools) 160-174, which cooperate to provide desired functionality according to [[the]] stored data 154, such as data that

2

may have been collected and stored in an OKRAA database (historical and computed data) and other data indicative of other factors that may provide some quantitative and/or qualitative measure related to some aspect of business operations. Such other factors may include circumstances associated with a local economy, weather, competition, nearby attractions or sporting events, and/or any other situation or circumstance that might affect some aspect of a company or business.

(4)   Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 19, line 26 as follows:

Fig. 10 illustrates a functional block diagram of the method component (or module) 162 in accordance with an aspect of the present invention. The method component 162 includes a method manager 402 that may be associated with a user interface, through which a user may add, remove, or otherwise manipulate a method that may be implemented within the system 150 (Fig. 4). The method component 162 also includes a methods interface 404 that may be employed to create one or more methods. Each method is a combination of one or more expressions that has a unique name and application characteristics that determine how and to which data each respective method may be applied. Expressions may be combined, for example, via programmatic operators (IF, WHEN, CASE, etc.) to define how and under what circumstances the component expressions are to be utilized. The method data may be stored in a table or other data structure for identifying a list of defined methods that are available to the system. A method may also be utilized to retrieve desired data and/or to convert that data into a useful representation, such as may correspond to budget data for a given account on one or more days.

(5)   Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 20, line 21, as follows:

The method component 162 also includes an operand interface [[408]] 406 that may be employed to create ~~define~~ defined segments of data that are to be processed or accumulated for use by the expressions interface to generate expressions. The operands may be global to the methods and the expressions so that a given operand may be applicable to numerous types of data. Each operand further may include attributes, which may define various characteristics of each respective operand. The data pulled from a database and utilized by an expression or an operand associated therewith may come, for example, from a single account record, from a range of account records, or from a set of account records.

(6)   Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 20, line 21 as follows:

The method component 162 also includes an operand interface [[408]] 410 that may be employed to create define segments of data that are to be processed or accumulated for use by the expressions interface to generate expressions. The operands may be global to the methods and the expressions so that a given operand may be applicable to numerous types of data. Each operand further may include attributes, which may define various characteristics of each respective operand. The data pulled from a database and utilized by an expression or an operand associated therewith may come, for example, from a single account record, from a range of account records, or from a set of account records.

(7)   Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 21, line 22 as follows:

By way of further example, raw data may also be collected concerning the number of rooms occupied at a hotel and the number of rooms vacant. These two pieces of data may be stored in an FMS record and translated into a desired record format (e.g., [[and]] an OKRAA record format). A method may be associated with an account that includes the identified two fields. The method may retrieve those two pieces of information from the records for a range of dates and produce a derived number, namely, the occupancy rate for that hotel. The occupancy rate may then, in turn, be used by a separate method that employs a constant to represent the labor needs per room and the derived occupancy rate to compute the forecasted daily labor needs for that hotel over each day in a selected date range.

(8)   Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 24, line 30 as follows:

Once the calendar types and periods have been defined, a user may the set or align the historical calendars with each calendar year for which budgeting and/or forecasting may be performed. Attributes associated with selected days in each calendar, such as by specifying desired characteristics about the calendar, also may be selected. The calendar may then be generated and stored as a table that includes fields identifying the specified characteristics of the respective calendar.

(9)   Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 25, line 18, as follows:

Referring now to Fig. [[14A]] 14, the calendar component 164 (Fig. 4) may include a calendar alignment system 540, which aligns or links historical calendars based on calendar set up data 542, in accordance with an aspect of the present invention. The calendar alignment system 540 generates calendar alignment data 544 for each calendar in the historical database. The calendar alignment data 544, which may be stored at the central server 14 (Fig. 1), provides a day-to-day alignment between each day in a user-defined calendar and each day in the historical database. This enables the system 150 (Fig. 4) to budget/forecast a day-to-day (or other specified time base) impact on one or more account attributes of a COA for a facility or for a selected aspect of facility operation.

(10)   Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 26, line 13, as follows:

For example, May 1 in each of the years 1995 through [[2000]] 1999 occurs on a different day of the week, as indicated in Table IV. As mentioned above, operating characteristics in certain industries (e.g., the hospitality industry) may be more dependent on the day of the week than the date. Therefore, if Saturday, May 1, [[2000,]] 1999 is the starting date of a user-defined calendar, the calendar alignment function 548 is programmed and/or configured to link each twenty-third Saturday of each other calendar year in the stored data, such as illustrated in Table V. The calendar alignment function 548, in turn, creates corresponding historical time periods in each calendar year that include the same day of the week and year as its respective starting date. As a result, the alignment data may include alignment criteria indicating a starting day in each calendar year that is the first day of a calendar period for each user-defined calendar. The alignment data also may include parameters indicating an ending day and/or the duration of the respective calendar period.

(11)   Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 27, line 4, as follows:

Referring back to Fig. 12, another feature of the calendar component 164 relates to characterizing calendar attributes. Calendar attributes (or events) correspond to various types of days, such as holidays, events (e.g., sporting events, festivals, concerts, etc.), conventions (e.g., held at the facility or at nearby venues), renovations and other types of days (e.g., attractions,

weather, news, etc.) that may affect operating characteristics of a business over a period of one or more days. One or more aspects of facility operation (*e.g.*, accounts from the COA) may be designated for each calendar attribute in each user-defined calendar. The accounts may be designated by a user according to the type of day and/or which specific day it is (*e.g.*, Is it Super Bowl Sunday?, Independence day?, Jazz Fest weekend?, etc.). More than one event may occur on a given day of the year (*e.g.*, overlapping special days) and/or more than one account may be designated for each calendar event. The designated accounts are analyzed, for example, by a method that applies the designated accounts to corresponding days in the stored data, which may include historical data and computed data, to determine (quantitatively and/or qualitatively) an expected level of impact associated with each designated account for each event in the selected calendar period.

(12)   Please amend Table VII beginning on page 33, line 17 as follows:

TABLE VII

Field	Description
Profile Name	The name of the profile
Profile Type	The type of the profile (*e.g.* attraction, event, competition, etc.)
Profile description	The description of the named profile
Date Range	The date range of the profile
Distance	The distance of the profile form the site/property
SWOT	The 'Strength' , Weakness', 'Opportunities' and 'Threats' a particular 'profile type' may possess
SWOT Description	The description of the 'SWOT'
Attribute Name	The list identifying all attributes of a particular profile (*e.g.*, Location, ~~Traffie~~ Traffic)
Attribute Value	The values associated with each attribute
Site ID	The site/location associated with a particular attribute
Time-based attributes	Information about a time-based attribute's month wise for the budget year (BY), the previous year(BY-1) and the year prior to that(BY-2)

(13)   Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 38, line 3, as follows:

As described above, a KRA may be linked to a predefined method that is to be applied to the selected account(s) to derive an impact based on the data processed by the method, such as based on budget parameters in the budgeting/forecasting process (*e.g.,* date range, account range, etc.). The method selection user interface element 682 may include a drop down menu listing the available methods that are applicable based on how the accounts have been selected. For example, some methods may only be applicable to a single account, other methods may be applicable to range of accounts, and other methods may be applicable to a set of accounts, such as may be defined by an accumulator. In this way, if an impact percentage is entered for a particular KRA attribute (*e.g.*, an account of the COA), an associated method may derive value(s) associated with one or more other attributes to which the impact percentage is applied to compute the impact value.